policy of meddling in continental affairs. In the Batavian, Helvetian, Cisalpine, and Ligurian republics the English diplomatic agents renewed their efforts to discredit the French influence, giving comfort and support to those who would gladly have overturned all that Bonaparte had done. The malcontents were, however, comparatively few, because the people, having so long been the plaything of the old European dynasties, had been but slightly invigorated by the revolutionary epoch, and were content if only they might enjoy a period of uninterrupted repose.

In Germany, however, the English envoys had a better field, for in that disrupted land the case of the population, though resembling that of those who dwelt in the countries just enumerated, was not identical. Ever since France had asserted the doctrine that her natural frontier was the Rhine, the simplest answer to the question of how the temporal princes of the Germanic body were to be indemnified for the territories she was seizing had evidently been found in recurring to Richelieu's policy at the close of the Thirty Years' War, namely, the secularization of bishoprics, and their incorporation with dynastic states. In the Congress of Rastadt, Austria had grudgingly admitted this as a guiding principle, disastrous as it was to her supremacy in the empire — a supremacy based on the support of the ecclesiastical rulers, who, being bound to no dynasty, naturally rallied about the great Roman Catholic power, in opposition to Prussia, her Protestant rival. So far, therefore, Roman Catholicism in Germany had been in the main conservative, and English diplomatists found ample room for the display of their ingenuity in offsetting religious factions, as well as political cliques and dynastic interests, one against the other.

But after the Concordat Bonaparte's position was so